Archie ADVENTURE SERIES

NO. 123 US $2.19

SEGA

SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

TORN BETWEEN TWO HOTTIES: "Heart Held Hostage" CONCLUDES— BUT WHO'S HEART ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ANYWAY— PRINCESS SALLY... OR MINA THE MONGOOSE?

PLUS:

RAD RED MIGHT BE DEAD, BUT IT DOESN'T STOP HIM FROM GETTING HIS OWN STORY— IT'S THE THIRD INSTALLMENT OF "AFTERLIFE"

WHO OR WHAT IS THE LAST ROBIAN? SONIC FINDS OUT, BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE HIM HAPPY

DIRECT EDITION

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (ISSN 1070-0609) No. 123, July 2003. Published every 4 weeks, twice in April by Archie Comic Publications, Inc., 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543-2318. Richard H. Goldwater, President and Co-Publisher; Michael I. Silberkleit, Chairman and Co-Publisher. Single copies $2.19 in the U.S., $2.59 in Canada. Subscription rate U.S. $26.47 for 13 issues, $33.67 in Canada. All Canadian orders payable in U.S. funds. SEGA, Sonic the Hedgehog, and all related characters and indicia are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA CORPORATION © 1991-2000. SEGA CORPORATION and SONICTEAM, LTD./SEGA CORPORATION © 2001-2003. All Rights Reserved. The product is manufactured under license from Sega of America, Inc., 650 Townsend St., Ste. 650, San Francisco, CA 94103 www.sega.com. Any similarities between characters, names, persons, and/or institutions in this book and any living, dead, or fictional characters, names, persons, and/or institutions are not intended and if they exist, are purely coincidental. Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Mamaroneck, New York and at additional mailing offices. Title registered in U.S. patent office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to SONIC THE HEDGEHOG, c/o Archie Comic Publications, Inc., 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543-2318. Printed in Canada.

KARL BOLLERS & J. AXER PRESENT
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
IN
"Heart Held Hostage" part two
CONOR TOMAS INKER
JASON JENSEN COLORIST
JEFF POWELL LETTERER
J.F. GABRIE EDITOR
VICTOR GORELICK MANAGING EDITOR
RICHARD GOLDWATER EDITOR IN CHIEF
THERE HE IS--
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
--MY DREAM HUNK--
MINA?!
--AND HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM.

ARE YOU CRAZY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I-I CAME TO HELP YOU.

WHERE ARE THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS?

I DUNNO. I GUESS I MUST'VE LEFT THEM BACK AT CASTLE ACORN.

I JUST USED MY MONGOOSE SPEED TO TAKE OFF AFTER YOU. I REALLY WASN'T THINKING.

I THINK WE BOTH JUICED WITHOUT THINKING.

WE SURE DO HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. DID YOU EVER NOTICE THAT?

OH, SURE. Y KNOW WHAT ELSE I NOTICED? WE DON'T HAVE MUCH IN THE WAY OF BACK-UP.

OH, GUESS I WAS FOLLOWING YOUR LEAD.

MY BAD. SO, IT'S UP TO US TO SAVE PRINCESS SALLY FROM NACK THE WEASEL AND HIS BOYS?

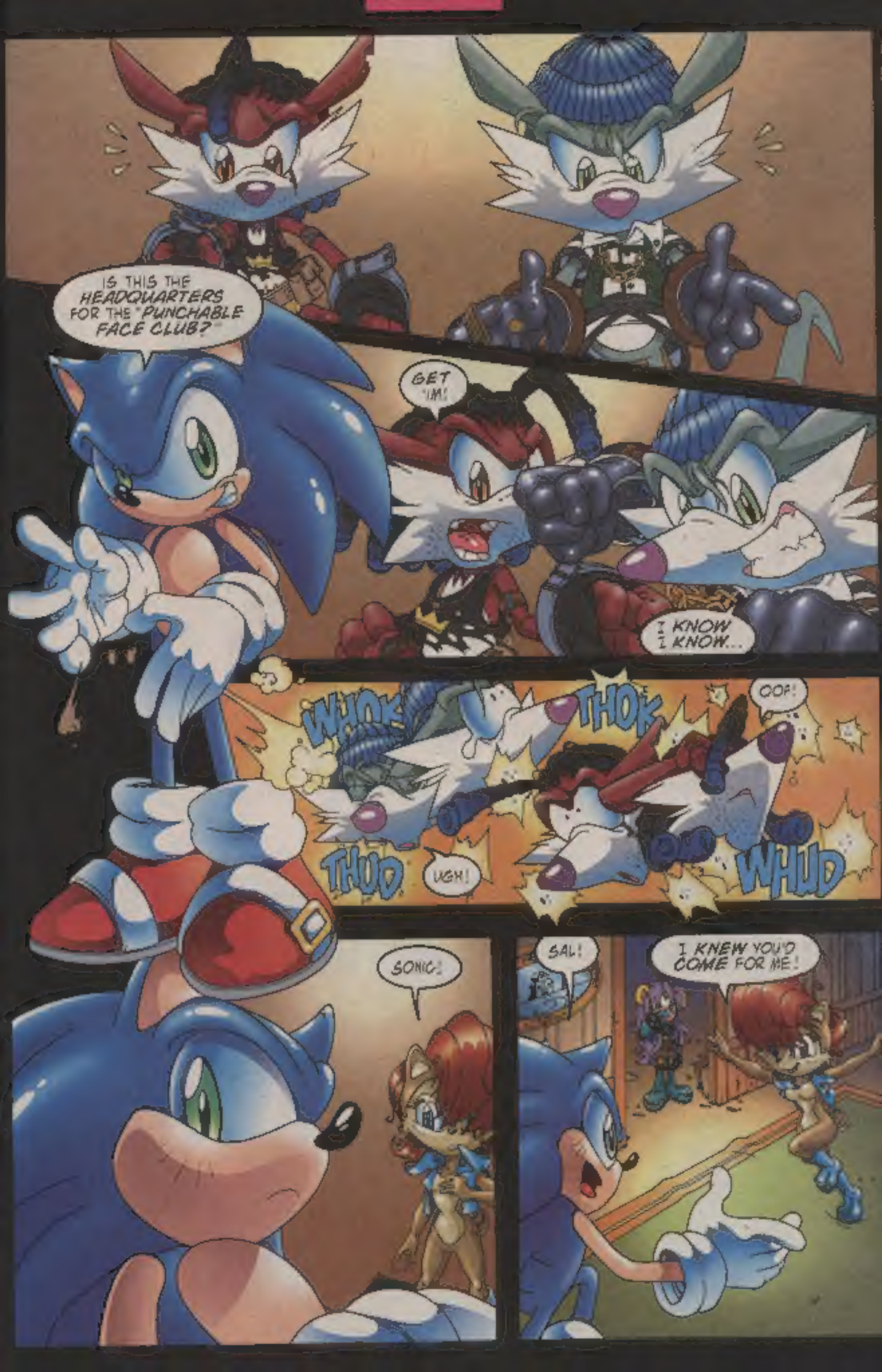
WELL, AS WE USED TO SAY BACK IN THE DAY, "LET'S DO IT TO IT!"

WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING...
SO, COULD YOU RUN IT BY ME AGAIN, NACK? WHY EXACTLY DID YOU KIDNAP ME?
IT'S GENIUS, BABY!
YOU'RE A PRINCESS WHICH MEANS MOMMY AND DADDY ARE KING AND QUEEN. Y DIG? WE HOLD YOU HOSTAGE THEY PAY US BIG TO GIVE YOU BACK.
THAT'S YOUR INGENIOUS SCHEME? TRADE ME OFF FOR SOME OF THE FAMILY'S LEFTOVER KINDLING? HUH. I'D HEARD A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT YOU NACK...
...BUT I GUESS I HEARD WRONG.
WHAT DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ME? WHO TOLD YOU?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?
WHY NOT LET ME JOIN YOUR GANG? I COULD KEEP PRETENDING TO BE A HOSTAGE, AND MY PARENTS COULD KEEP PAYING YOU FOR MY SAFE RETURN.

WHY SO SURPRISED? DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE HAVING ALL OF YOUR WEALTH CONTROLLED BY YOUR PARENTS?
IT'S AWFUL! THIS WOULD BE MY CHANCE TO GET BACK AT THEM.
WHOA, PRINCESS. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD ALL THIS TEENAGE RESENTMENT TOWARD THE 'RENTS.
WELL, WOULDN'T YOU?
OF COURSE. I FEEL YOUR PAIN...
REALLY? DOES IT FEEL ANYTHING...
...LIKE THIS?
!
OOH!
KRUNCH
SIT THIS ONE OUT, TOUGH GUY.
I KNOW IT'S DIFFICULT, BUT DON'T BE DUMB, FELLAS. NOW, PUT DOWN THOSE WEAPONS NICE AND SLOW.

BRAKT
PLACE IS HUGE.
IF WE SPLIT UP, WE CAN COVER THE MOST GROUND USING OUR SPEED.
HE'S TOUCHING ME! BE STILL MY BEATING HEART!
IF YOU FIND THEM FIRST, DON'T DO ANYTHING RECKLESS. JUST COME GET ME AS FAST AS YOU CAN, KA-PEESH?
SURE...
...I'LL DO ANYTHING TO PROVE MY LOVE FOR YOU, SONIC.
NICE PLAY-ACTING, SALLY-GIRL. YOU'VE ESCAPED. NOW WHAT?

SPAK
SPAK
GUNSHOTS!
THOSE WERE WARNING SHOTS, PRINCESS!
DON'T MAKE US DO SOMETHING STUPID.
YOU GOONS DON'T NEED ME FOR THAT!
NOWHERE TO RUN-- AND I'M OUT OF AMMO!
KLIK KLIK KLIK


IS THIS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE "PUNCHABLE FACE CLUB?"
GET 'IM!
I KNOW I KNOW...
WHOK
THOK
OOF!
THUD
UGH!
WHUD
SONIC!
SAL!
I KNEW YOU'D COME FOR ME!

YOU ALWAYS DO! I--
I LOVE YOU.
I KNOW.
NO!

FEEL SICK
STUPIDSTUPIDSTUPID HE LOVES THE PRINCESS NOT ME I'VE BEEN FOOLING MYSELF ALL ALONG
IT DOESN'T MATTER EVEN THOUGH HE'LL NEVER CARE FOR ME LIKE HE DOES HER
I'LL STILL DO ANYTHING FOR HIM
WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE JACK WENT?
LOSER PROBABLY DECIDED TO CUT HIS LOSSES AND MAKE A CLEAN GETAWAY COME ON LET'S FIND MINA
RIGHT
HAVE TO TRY NOT TO LOOK LIKE I'VE BEEN CRY--
WHA--? OH NO!
BRAT

NOOOO!!
GOTTA SAVE HER--
--FOR HIM!
MINA!
SEE YA!
NO.
I. LOVE YOU, SONIC
NO.

SHE'S COMING TO
WELCOME BACK. KID YOU GAVE US ALL A SCARE
WE MONGOOSES HEAL PRETTY QUICKLY
WHAT YOU DID TODAY WAS REALLY DUMB
BUT IT WAS TOTALLY BRAVE AND WAY PAST COOL
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE IN COMMON HUH?
PRINCESS SALLY
ARE YOU OKAY?
YES MINA WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU WERE HURT PRETTY BAD
I--I... GET OVER IT
In Memory of
Minerva Ifill
1912 2002

KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA

AFTERLIFE

Part Three

IN WHICH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS COMMEMORATE THE DEARLY DEPARTED–
KEN PENDERS · SCRIPT & INKS
ART MAWHINNEY · PENCILS
VICKIE WILLIAMS · LETTERER
J JENSEN · COLORIST JUSTIN GABRIE · EDITOR
--IN RECALLING THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SEGA'S EMBATTLED ECHIDNA

HAS DISCOVERED A NEW REALITY, AND FINDS HIMSELF RELIVING OLD EXPERIENCES...

DON'T YOU WISH IT COULD ALWAYS BE THIS WAY, KNUCKLES?

YEAH--

--BUT LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.

BESIDES, YOU GOT LOTS OF FRIENDS BACK HOME, SALLY!

YOU'RE PROBABLY NEVER ALONE!

I SPEND MORE TIME LEARNING TO BE A PRINCESS THAN I DO WITH MY FRIENDS!

THAT'S NO FUN!

YOU WERE QUITE SMITTEN WITH THE PRINCESS, KNUCKLES!
THAT WAS BEFORE JUNIE-SU
I'M JUST SURPRISED THEY CAN'T SEE US!
AS I EXPLAINED TO YOU, YOU'RE IN A VIRTUAL ZONE--
--A REPOSITORY OF ALL LIFE'S EXPERIENCES--
--AND YOU ARE SIMPLY RELIVING YOURS!
FOR THE MOST PART, I WAS PRETTY ROUTINE BACK THEN!
DAD WOULD SCHOOL ME, I'D DO SOME CHORES--
--AND WE HAD FUN AFTERWARDS!
UNTIL THE DAY YOU WATCHED AS HE JOURNEYED INTO THE FORBIDDEN ZONE!
DAD!
YEAH, THAT WAS TOUGH TO TAKE!
DIDN'T YOU FEEL PREPARED TO ASSUME THE MANTLE OF GUARDIAN?

OH, YEAH! NO SWEAT!

I JUST DIDN'T WANT MY DAD TO LEAVE!

I HADN'T GOTTEN IT OUT OF MY SYSTEM WHEN A *RUCKUS* BROKE OUT...

"IT WAS THAT CROCK I MET BEFORE."*

SQUAAWK!

SQUAAAK!

*SEE LAST ISSUE

YOU MANGY BUZZARD!

IF YA HAVEN'T HEARD, YOU'RE ONE *DEAD* BIRD!

HOW ABOUT THIS ONE--

-- THE *BIGGER* THEY ARE, THE *HARDER* THEY *FALL*!

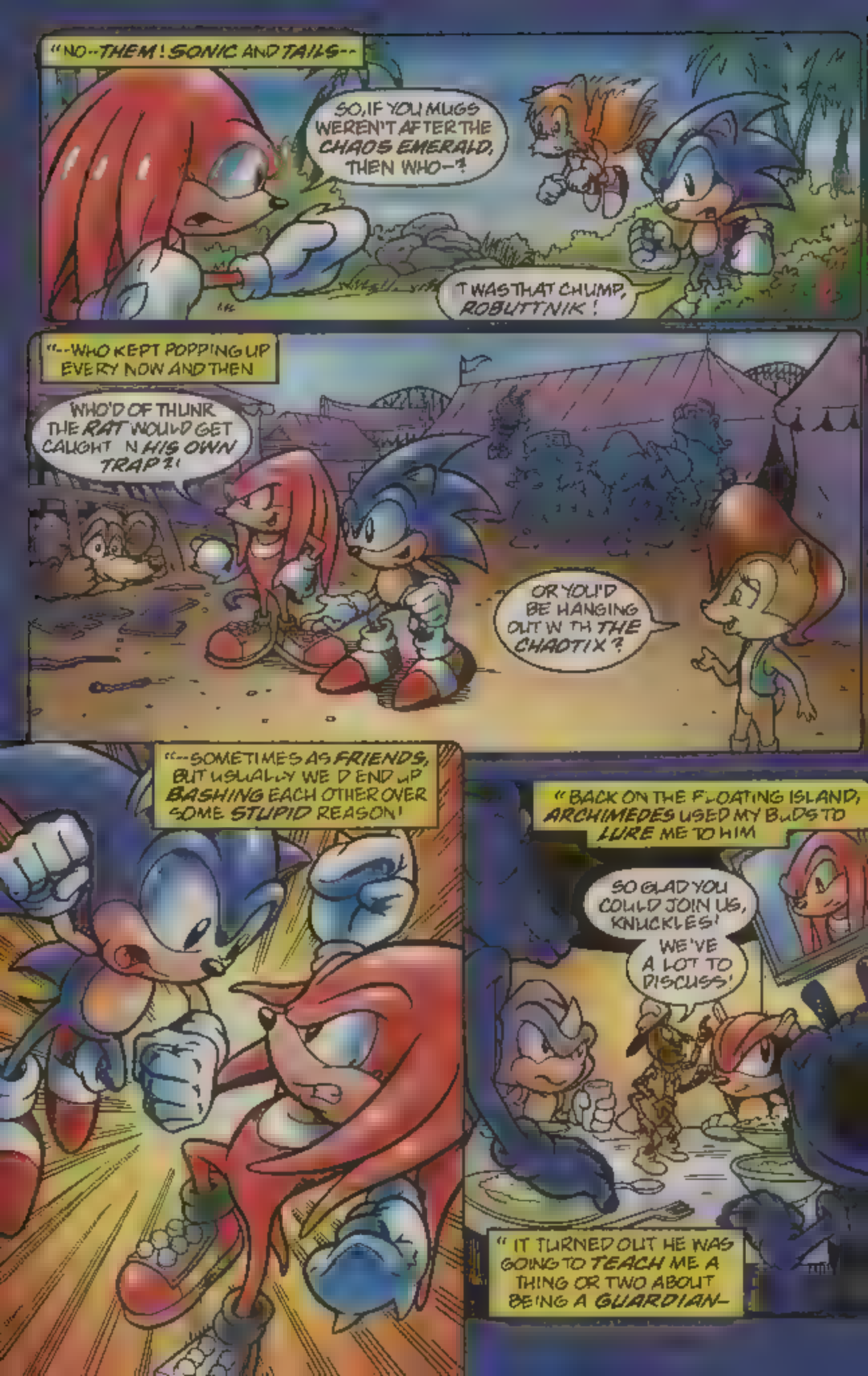
WE DUKED IT OUT A BIT AND SHOOK HANDS AFTER!

SO, WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?

STUPID BIRD TRIED TO WREAK MY *WALKMAN*!

"FOR THE MOST PART, BEING A *GUARDIAN* WAS AN EASY GIG, UNTIL THE DAY *HE* SHOWED UP..."

"YOU MEAN *HIM*?"


"NO--THEM! SONIC AND TAILS--
SO, IF YOU MUGS WEREN'T AFTER THE CHAOS EMERALD, THEN WHO--?
T WAS THAT CHUMP, ROBUTTNIK!
"--WHO KEPT POPPING UP EVERY NOW AND THEN
WHO'D OF THUNK THE RAT WOULD GET CAUGHT N HIS OWN TRAP?!
OR YOU'D BE HANGING OUT W TH THE CHAOTIX?
"--SOMETIMES AS FRIENDS, BUT USUALLY WE D END UP BASHING EACH OTHER OVER SOME STUPID REASON!
"BACK ON THE FLOATING ISLAND, ARCHIMEDES USED MY BUDS TO LURE ME TO HIM
SO GLAD YOU COULD JOIN US, KNUCKLES!
WE'VE A LOT TO DISCUSS!
" IT TURNED OUT HE WAS GOING TO TEACH ME A THING OR TWO ABOUT BEING A GUARDIAN--

"--UNTIL MY ANCESTOR'S BROTHER, *DIMITRI*, POPPED IN TO GIVE ME A *CRASH COURSE* HIMSELF!

BEHOLD THE *AWESOME POWER* OF--

ENERJAK!

"THINGS LOOKED *GRIM* FOR AWHILE THERE, BUT WE WON IN THE END--

"--THANKS TO SOME ASSISTANCE FROM THE *FIRE-ANTS*-

"--AND SOME *HIDDEN* HELP FROM MY FATHER, *LOCKE*!

"BUT EVEN WITH *ENERJAK* OUT OF SIGHT, THERE WAS STILL *KRAGOK* AND THE *DARK LEGION* TO DEAL WITH SOON AFTER THAT.

YOU CAN EITHER *JOIN* US, KNUCKLES-

-OR *DIE*!

"WE FOUGHT, MORE OR LESS, TO A DRAW, AND I ENDED UP MEETING JULIE-SU AS A RESULT...

YOU'RE A-- A GIRL!

BOY! YOU'RE A SWIFT ONE!

"YOU HAD A HARDER TIME DEALING WITH THE RESTORATION OF BOTH ECHIDNAOPOLIS AND YOUR MOTHER MOVING TO THE ISLAND.

DON'T TELL ME MY SON HAS FORGOTTEN HIS OWN MOTHER!

"I'D RATHER DEAL WITH ENERJAK LITERALLY TAKING ME APART--

ENJOY LIFE AS A NEURON, KNUCKLES!

HA HAHA HAHA

--THAN HAVING TO DEAL WITH MY PARENTS!

MOST OF THE TIME, ANYWAY!

WERE THEY THAT DIFFICULT FOR YOU?

MAYBE NOT!

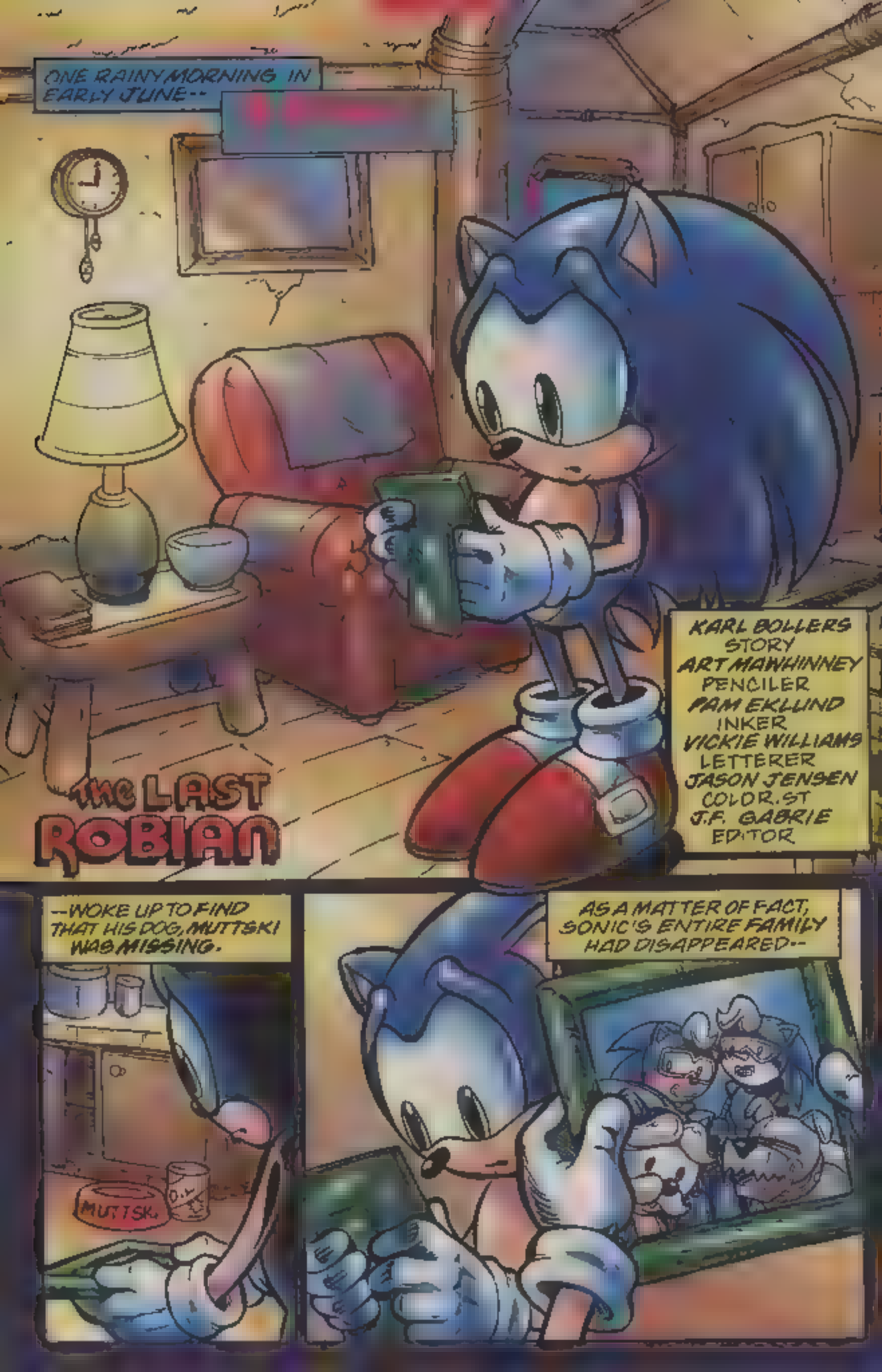
WHEN I GOT THE FIRST HINT SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT ME--

YOUR INJURIES! THEY'RE--THEY'RE DISAPPEARING!

BUT HOW?

--THAT WAS REALLY THE PITS!

NEXT: IT'S JUDGEMENT DAY FOR KNUCKLES! BE HERE FOR THE ASTOUNDING CONCLUSION!


ONE RAINY MORNING IN EARLY JUNE--
THE LAST ROBIAN
KARL BOLLERS STORY
ART MAWHINNEY PENCILER
PAM EKLUND INKER
VICKIE WILLIAMS LETTERER
JASON JENSEN COLOR.ST
J.F. GABRIE EDITOR
--WOKE UP TO FIND THAT HIS DOG, MUTTSKI WAS MISSING.
MUTTSKI
AS A MATTER OF FACT, SONIC'S ENTIRE FAMILY HAD DISAPPEARED--

--AS WELL AS THE ENTIRE ROBOTICIZED POPULATION OF PLANET MOBIUS.

THE EVIL DOCTOR ROBOTNIK WAS IMMEDIATELY SUSPECTED OF THE HEINOUS ACT--

--BUT WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

SONIC'S FRIENDS TRIED THEIR BEST TO LEND HIM COMFORT--

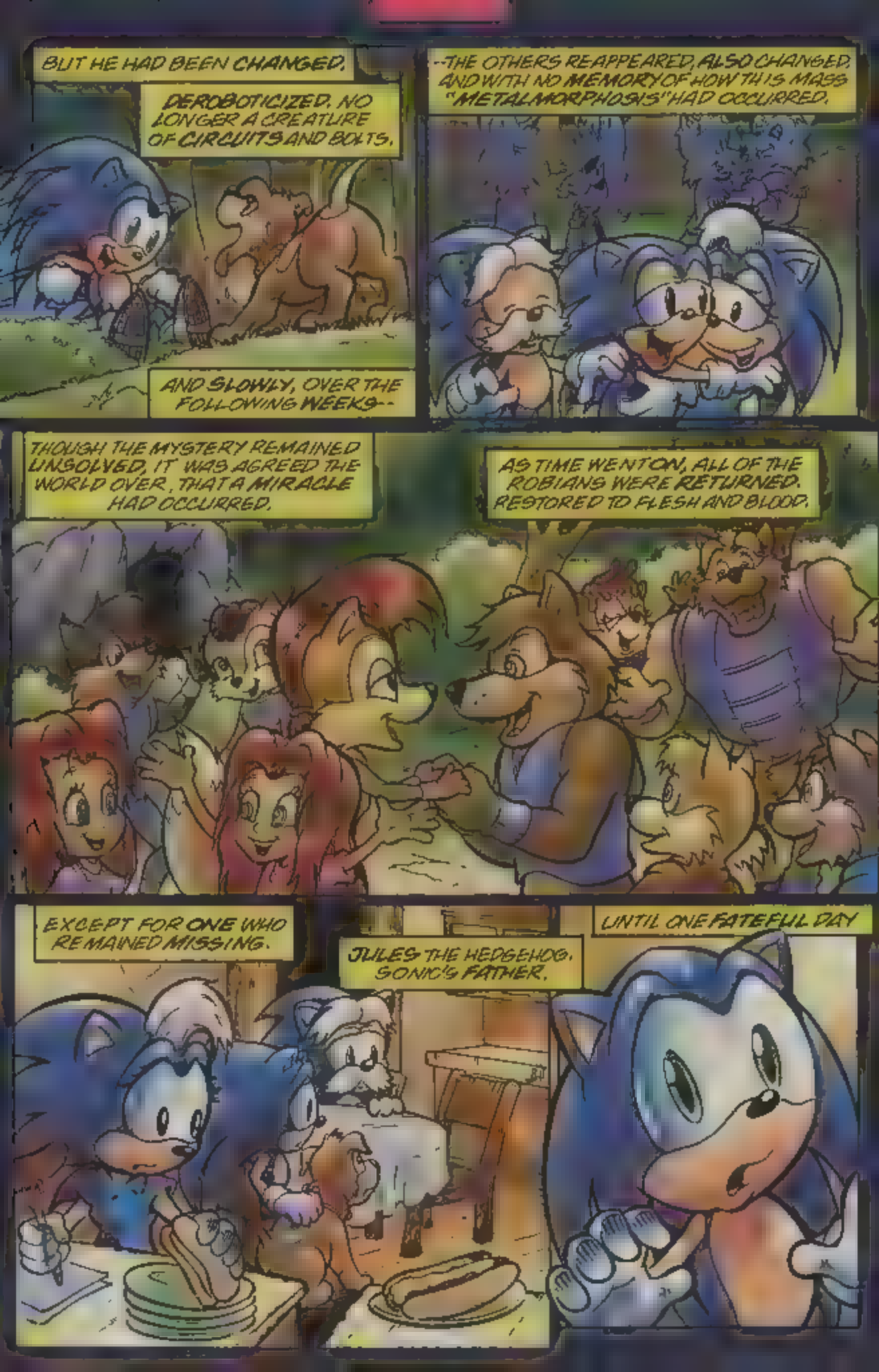
--AND THE HEROIC HEDGEHOG FOUND HIMSELF ALSO CONSOLING OTHERS DURING THIS TIME OF SUFFERING--

--BUT NOTHING COULD TAKE AWAY THE AWFUL PAIN, OR THE AWFUL FACT--

--THE ROBIANS WERE GONE.

AND THEN, LESS THAN THREE WEEKS LATER, SONIC RECEIVED WORD FROM ALLIES IN DISTANT DEERWOOD FOREST--

--THAT MUTTSKI HAD BEEN FOUND!


BUT HE HAD BEEN CHANGED.
DEROBOTICIZED. NO LONGER A CREATURE OF CIRCUITS AND BOLTS.
AND SLOWLY, OVER THE FOLLOWING WEEKS--
--THE OTHERS REAPPEARED, ALSO CHANGED, AND WITH NO MEMORY OF HOW THIS MASS "METAMORPHOSIS" HAD OCCURRED.
THOUGH THE MYSTERY REMAINED UNSOLVED, IT WAS AGREED THE WORLD OVER, THAT A MIRACLE HAD OCCURRED.
AS TIME WENT ON, ALL OF THE ROBIANS WERE RETURNED. RESTORED TO FLESH AND BLOOD.
EXCEPT FOR ONE WHO REMAINED MISSING.
JULES THE HEDGEHOG, SONIC'S FATHER.
UNTIL ONE FATEFUL DAY

DAD!!

HE WAS BACK, SAFE. BUT UNLIKE THE OTHERS WHO HAD VANISHED AND REAPPEARED...

...SONIC'S FATHER WAS STILL ROBOTICIZED.

DON'T WORRY, JULES! I WON'T REST UNTIL I'VE FOUND A WAY TO MAKE YOU JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!

BUT EVEN THOUGH SONIC'S UNCLE CHUCK WORKED DAY AND NIGHT TO FIND A CURE...

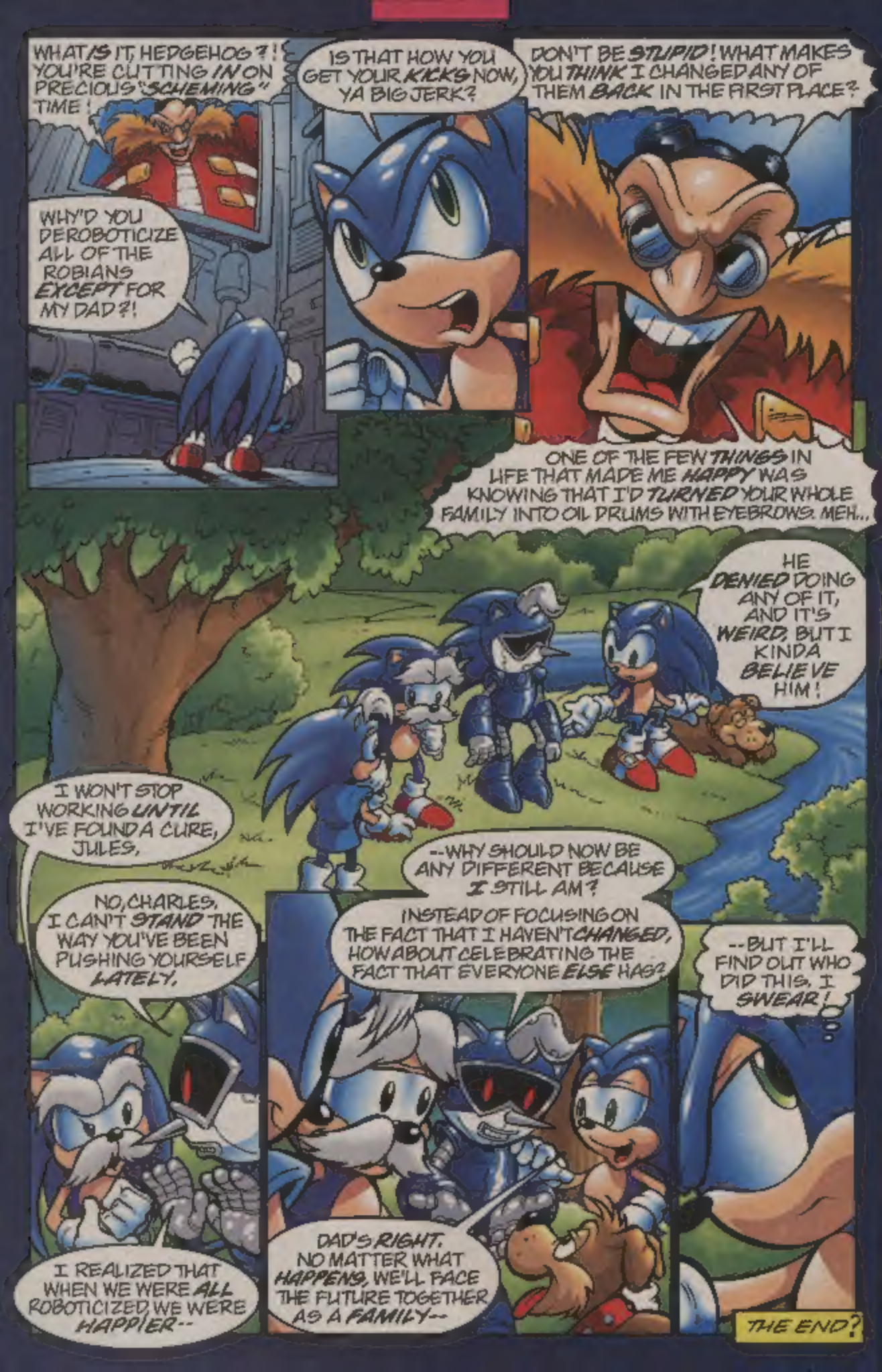
...HE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.

AS THE WEEKS DRAGGED ON, JULES DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS AN OUTSIDER LOOKING IN AT HIS FAMILY. THEY COULD EAT.

THEY COULD SLEEP. HE COULDN'T. WHY HAD IT TAKEN HIM SO LONG TO NOTICE ALL THESE DIFFERENCES?

SONIC THOUGHT IT CRUEL AND UNFAIR, AND THEN REALIZED, THE ONLY PERSON ON THE PLANET HE ASSOCIATED THOSE WORDS WITH WAS--

ROBOTNIK!!


WHAT IS IT, HEDGEHOG?! YOU'RE CUTTING IN ON PRECIOUS "SCHEMING" TIME!
WHY'D YOU DEROBOTICIZE ALL OF THE ROBIANS EXCEPT FOR MY DAD?!
IS THAT HOW YOU GET YOUR KICKS NOW, YA BIG JERK?
DON'T BE STUPID! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I CHANGED ANY OF THEM BACK IN THE FIRST PLACE?
ONE OF THE FEW THINGS IN LIFE THAT MADE ME HAPPY WAS KNOWING THAT I'D TURNED YOUR WHOLE FAMILY INTO OIL DRUMS WITH EYEBROWS. MEH...
HE DENIED DOING ANY OF IT, AND IT'S WEIRD, BUT I KINDA BELIEVE HIM!
I WON'T STOP WORKING UNTIL I'VE FOUND A CURE, JULES.
NO, CHARLES, I CAN'T STAND THE WAY YOU'VE BEEN PUSHING YOURSELF LATELY.
I REALIZED THAT WHEN WE WERE ALL ROBOTICIZED, WE WERE HAPPIER--
--WHY SHOULD NOW BE ANY DIFFERENT BECAUSE I STILL AM?
INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON THE FACT THAT I HAVEN'T CHANGED, HOW ABOUT CELEBRATING THE FACT THAT EVERYONE ELSE HAS?
DAD'S RIGHT. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE'LL FACE THE FUTURE TOGETHER AS A FAMILY--
--BUT I'LL FIND OUT WHO DID THIS, I SWEAR!
THE END?

SONIC-GRAMS

THIS JUST IN!

Hey Sonic fans. Now... I could speak about something I've been mentioning for some time: that next issue begins the story that leads into SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #125, the 10th Anniversary issue of the comic or that Yuji Naka, the Sonic game creator will be writing a special message in it. Instead, I'd like to devote this space to tell you about a new addition to the Sonic freelance family. Specifically, an addition to Steven Butler's family... Aaron Dale Butler, born on Wednesday, April 2, 2003. Of course, I can't do the news justice, as Steven can, so I'll just turn it over to the man himself:

"IT'S A BOY!!!!!! We just got back from the hospital (been there since Tuesday evening). Christy went into labor in the middle of a Wal-Mart. I made a mad dash with her and the rest of our kids to the hospital Tuesday evening, and waited until 3:15 am, when Aaron Dale decided it was time for him to show up on the scene. He couldn't be more fine, and this papa couldn't be more proud."

Congratulations, Steven! He says he'll give us the details as well as let us publish a pic of the newest Butler in a future letters page.

On to other news, I'd like to give a mention of a miscredit: In the SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #120, Andrew Pepoy was credited for inking pages that were done by Jim Amash. Sorry Jim. Please forgive us.

See you in four weeks for the Sonic event of the year! Later.

jg

Note: Due to the overwhelming amount of e-mail and snail mail, it is impossible for us to reply personally to each and every message. However, your opinions are important to us and each message will be read. Also, due to space limitations, some correspondence may be edited. **THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING!**

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Ken Penders here. As I started putting the latest letters page together, I began to notice a certain thread popping up once again. People wondering if we were still going to be here after our upcoming 125th Anniversary issue. Well, folks, I can state beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we most certainly are, and the best is yet to come.

And now, with only 2 issues to go before we celebrate, let's see what the rest of you had to say:

Dear Sonic Grams, Ken etc.

I just wanted to say first and foremost, how much I admire the beautiful, and stupendous work you guys have done. I have been a fan of Sonic ever since I saw the blue blur spin his way onto a video game screen. And I was even more thrilled to watch to the literally "poetic" and even more incredible Sat AM cartoon series. Which brings me to you guys. I have been reading Sonic comics for at least 8 to 9 years, and it's been a pleasurable honor watching this comic evolve right before my eyes as I grew up. From the days Sonic was kicking Caterkiller and all the other badniks into spare parts, to his more recent adventures becoming Mecha-Sonic again, and the eagerly tempting love triangle with Mina and Sally. I gotta tell you, spending all these years reading these comics as each one comes to me month after month, it's one of the best parts of my growing life. But none of this would have been possible without the brilliant script and story work done by Ken Penders and all the other geniuses on the Sonic staff. Over the years, I've noticed the amazing complex changes this comic has endured. And as a die-hard fan, I just wanted to congratulate you guys on all the amazing work you've done.

Like how you have incorporated serious issues, inside a toon-based comic, and still had time to do humor as well, From Dulcy's abusive relationship with Zan, to the anger Sonic felt from Uncle Chuck denying his parents existence, the roboticized casualties of the war, to even Sally's apparent death during the Endgame. Time after time the countless stories changes, and has have never ceased to amaze me. Recently I just finished #118 and #119 and I gotta say, I loved 'em. I also understand you guys have been getting a lot of heat saying the stories are too short, but that's due more to trying to fit all of the characters in. I've also heard fans complain a lot about the aliens scenario, that transformed Dr. Robotnik and Snively into humans again. While I'll admit the idea sounds a bit too out-there for my tastes, deep down, from the artistic view, I can understand why you guys did it.

My guess is you needed some excuse to make them both human again, and this was the best you guys got. For that I respect and admire your imagination and creativity. I'm also becoming heavily infatuated with this triangle between Sally, Sonic, and cute newcomer, Mina the Mongoose. I am very much enjoying the tension, romance and intrigue of this triangle. I think Mina is a beautiful character both on the outside and within. There are some things you cannot change, and even though this is a comic book series, I think most fans would agree fate has determined that Sonic and Sally should end up together. But then again you writers could change fate seeing as how it's your comic book. But never the less, I hope to see more romantic developments between both Mina and Sally with Sonic. When it all comes down to it though, I pray that Sonic and Sally be the winning couple.

One concern I do have is that you are in fact killing off the Knuckles series, along with Knuckles himself. His series, while second in favorite compared to Sonic, I have to admit, is far more complex then any drama series can be. You guys give ol' dreadlocks so many twist and turns, it's no wonder he's still the same echinda after everything. So, I hope the redhead makes it through this.

I have one last very important question, and it has to do with Robotropolis' destruction. Thanks to the big nukes in issue #110 everything was wiped out, and that means the Roboticizer as well. So what I want to know is, with the roboticizer gone for good, and Uncle Chuck too wary to ever dare making another one, is there ever gonna be a chance or a time when all of the robians like Sonic's parents, Muttski, and all the others, are de-roboticized once and for all? Not to mention Tails' father and mother, to whom I'd still like to know what happened . In the meantime, I wish you guys good luck with all of the great art and story work you always come through with. And eagerly await the next issue of my fav spiny super speedy blue hedgehog. If they ever do make another toon series of Sonic, it should be from your stories in the comics. Bet you people would triple spin themselves out to see that ^^

Bye for now,

Sincerely your eternal fan
Rob The Red Scar

There's just about nothing that would rev our jets more here at Archie than seeing our stories in animated form on the tube, except for the new Sonic X animated series, produced by Sonic's creator Yuji Naka himself. I'll let Mr. Naka mention more about it in his message printing in SONIC #125. About your important question concerning the fate of the roboticized Mobians, I trust it's been answered to your satisfaction with this issue. **As for this issue, it's a wrap, people. We'll see you in thirty. Ciao. (Or is that Chao?)**

Frontispiece by J. Axer and Conor Tomas. Cover by Patrick SPAZiante, Nelson Ribeiro and Josh Ray. Letters Page layout & design by JoopsP.